



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER


Personal Identity in Islamic Philosophy and Contemporary Western Philosophy (Focusing on the Thoughts of Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi)

Dr. Shahabodin Vahidi Mehrajardi^{1*}, Dr. Mohammad Meftah², Amir Hossein Meftah³

1.* Assistant Prof. in Department of Philosophy and Wisdom, Faculty of Theology and Education, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran (*Corresponding Author*)

2. Assistant Prof. in Department of Shi'i Theology, Faculty of Shi'i Studies, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran, mohamad.meftah@gmail.com

3. Researcher in Islamic Seminary of Qom, Qom, Iran, meftah2476@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
<p>Article History: Received: 02 December 2023 Revised: 29 January 2024 Accepted: 25 February 2024</p>		<p>SUBJECT & OBJECTIVES: Throughout history, the concept of human identity has been a challenging topic in philosophy, with the responses of philosophers influencing various branches of science. In contemporary Western philosophy, there has been a shift towards viewing humans solely as physical beings. However, Islamic philosophy takes a different approach, rooted in rationality and the teachings of Islam. The <i>Misbah Yazdi</i> is a prominent Muslim philosopher who greatly contributed to the field and shed light on many philosophical issues. He derived the concept of human identity from Islamic philosophy, enriching it with Islamic teachings and offering a solution to the puzzle of human identity. He defined human beings based on their soul, rather than simply considering humans as a combination of body and soul.</p> <p>METHOD & FINDING: This research applies a qualitative approach with a critical analysis method. The primary finding of this article is to elucidate the key differences between Islamic and Western philosophy, focusing on <i>Misbah Yazdi's</i> perspective.</p> <p>CONCLUSION: The fundamental disparity between Islamic and Western philosophy concerning human identity lies in the concept of the soul. According to Islamic philosophy, the soul defines an individual's uniqueness, providing them with a clear and stable personality and identity. In contrast, Western philosophy leaves the identity of human beings shrouded in deep ambiguity. <i>Misbah Yazdi</i> presents a distinctive approach to this topic, offering insights and solutions that warrant further exploration.</p>
<p>Key Words: Soul Identity Personal Identity Islamic Philosophy Western Philosophy</p>		
<p>DOI: 10.22034/imjpl.2023.17489.1131</p>		
<p>DOR: 20.1001.1.26767619.2024.11.37.2.3</p>		
		
<p>* Corresponding Author: Email: vahidi@meybod.ac.ir ORCID: 0000-0001-6211-9961</p>		<p>Article Address Published on the Journal Site: http://p-l.journals.miu.ac.ir/article_9026.html</p>
<p>NUMBER OF REFERENCES</p> <p>36</p>	<p>NUMBER OF AUTHORS</p> <p>3</p>	<p>NATIONALITY OF AUTHOR</p> <p>(Iran)</p>

Introduction

Personal identity is a subject that delves into the philosophical inquiries that arise concerning our existence as human beings. It encompasses a multitude of questions that are pondered by nearly all individuals: What defines my essence? When did my existence commence? Who am I at the core? What will become of me upon my demise?

Throughout history, these questions have been extensively explored by various philosophers and religious traditions, each offering distinct responses that have shaped the lives of their followers accordingly. However, Western philosophy has thus far failed to provide conclusive answers to these inquiries, as the multitude of ideas put forth only serves to highlight its inherent limitations.

On the opposite side, the Islamic tradition and Islamic philosophy have approached these questions with a

different perspective, drawing upon the teachings of the Qur'an and the intellectual contributions of Islamic thinkers. Accordingly, they have managed to provide comprehensive and satisfactory responses, not only to the aforementioned questions but also to other related inquiries.

Noticeably, these discussions fall within the realm of metaphysics, encompassing concepts that extend beyond the boundaries of human imagination, such as the pre-life and post-life existence.

In this article, we will delve into some topics within Islamic philosophy and Qur'anic teachings, specifically exploring the perspective of the *Misbah Yazdi* to shed light on the nature of human identity.

Misbah Yazdi possessed a profound understanding of *Mulla Sadra's* philosophy and Islamic knowledge. His works, characterized by their simplicity and accessibility, have resonated

with many individuals. As a contemporary philosopher, his discussions often intersect with the themes explored in Western philosophy. Despite he is known in Iran, only a few of his works have been translated into English, resulting in limited familiarity among English readers.

Thus, this article will not attempt to encompass the entirety of Western philosophers' ideas. Instead, it will provide a summary derived from the personal identity entry in the “*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*”. This entry, known for its conciseness and comprehensive compilation, serves as a valuable resource, with all quotations from Western philosophers being sourced from it, albeit with necessary modifications. (Ref: *Olson, 2022*)

Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

Throughout history, numerous renowned philosophers have engaged in extensive discussions

regarding the nature of human beings from diverse perspectives. Notable diagrams such as *Thales, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Ibn Sina, Mulla Sadra, Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, John Locke, Schopenhauer, Hume, and William* have all contributed to this discourse. Many of these philosophers held the belief in the existence of the soul within mankind.

However, during the Age of Enlightenment, a period characterized by intellectual and philosophical advancements in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries, the metaphysical aspect of human beings was rejected. Consequently, the existence of the soul was denied, and human beings were solely interpreted in terms of their physical bodies; Even the intellect and emotions of human beings were considered functions of the brain rather than the soul.

Despite the rejection of the soul during the Age of

Enlightenment, the issue of human identity and its associated concerns continued to be a central focus in both pre-modern and postmodern periods. Western philosophy struggled to provide a satisfactory response to these inquiries; While Islamic philosophy thrived under the guidance of *Misbah Yazdi*.

Misbah Yazdi notable achievement lay in his ability to reconcile philosophical approaches with the teachings of the Qur'an. He prioritized the soul over the body, defining human beings primarily in terms of their soul rather than their physical body or the combination of the two.

The existence of the human soul serves as a crucial element in resolving numerous problems of human identity. However, this article does not delve into the evidence supporting the existence of the human soul from *Misbah Yazdi's* perspective.

Despite being deeply rooted in Islamic philosophy, *Misbah Yazdi's* profound understanding of Islam has enabled him to present novel viewpoints in response to advancements in empirical sciences. He does not seek to negate the accomplishments of experimental sciences but emphasizes the separation between the realm of identity and the human soul.

It is crucial to acknowledge the most significant literary works concerning human identity and elucidate their shortcomings in the following:

- "A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality", authored by *Perry* in 1978, exemplifies scholarly precision and thoroughness in its exploration of the subject matter.

- *Perry* in "Personal Identity", published in 2008, brings together the invaluable contributions of esteemed philosophers from

both the past and present, shedding light on the significant subject of personal identity.

- *Gallagher* in “*The Oxford Handbook of the Self*”, published in 2013, reflects the substantial growth in research on the self across various disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, psychopathology, and neuroscience. This interdisciplinary compilation of essays addresses pertinent questions in all these fields.

- *Kind* in “*Persons and Personal Identity*”, published in 2015, amalgamates three distinct research domains: the essence of personhood, theories on personal identity over time, and the formation of self-identity. *Kind* conducts a comprehensive analysis of the principal contemporary theories found in the philosophical literature, evaluating

their strengths and weaknesses.

- *Noonan* in “*Personal Identity*”, released in 2019, situates the predicament of personal identity within the broader context of identity puzzles. *Noonan* delves into the major historical theories and contemporary debates; While also providing an up-to-date examination of personal identity about memory, animalism, and the works of *Shoemaker*, *Parfit*, *Olson*, and hybrid theorists.

The significance of these resources lies in their status as the foremost books on this subject matter. However, a prevalent issue with these books is their perspective on the nature of human beings. Many of them view humans solely as physical entities, leading them to address the question of identity through the lens of the body, reason,

memory, and emotions, among other factors.

In contrast, *Misbah Yazdi*, an Islamic philosopher, challenges the Western notions of human identity. Being a contemporary Muslim thinker, his theory on human identity aligns with the latest developments in this field.

The Problems of Personal Identity

There is a wide range of questions connected to the problem of personal identity. Discussions in this area are not always clear about which one is the main one. The following questions are being repeated anywhere:

1. Who Am I?

The question at hand may appear deceptively simple, as it pertains to personal identity, a concept that seems easily understood by even a child. However, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that contemplating personal identity can lead to a

complex and inconclusive line of thinking.

Beyond the realm of philosophy, personal identity is often associated with an individual's unique qualities or characteristics that set them apart from others. Common responses to this question often revolve around factors such as ethnic or national identity, religious beliefs, or one's role within their family or society.

It is important to note that personal identity, in this context, is not fixed or permanent; Rather, it is contingent and subject to change over time. The way an individual defines can vary from one moment to the next, and what may have once defined their identity may no longer be true.

For instance, a person may identify themselves as a teacher or as a man living in Japan; But another individual with the same attributes may have a different perspective

on these defining factors. It is crucial to recognize that these attributes are not set in stone and can evolve or be reassessed as circumstances change.

Not to forget that in many cases people who are under the false propaganda may have false images of themselves and it could be imposed on others as well.

The Who am I? question sometimes called the characterization question; (*Schechtman, 1996, Ch. 1*) That is, what determines someone's identity in this sense. (*Glover, 1988: Vol. 2*)

Misbah Yazdi believes that this question in the Islamic tradition and among the Islamic philosophers is the most fundamental question that may affect all the attitudes of a person and identity, and this issue has a connected deeply to all the Islamic teachings especially knowing God and the universe and other issues.

(*Misbah Yazdi, 2012, Vol. 1: 317*)

In Islamic philosophy, the answer to this question is not somehow important for philosophers and they do not try to answer it, rather they try to define the right approach to answering this question. That approach is by designing a complete system in which human beings have a vital position in it. For example, Muslim philosophers look at humans as special beings that can have a great role in the whole universe positively or negatively.

On another side defining the person and finding his identity will be belonged to him by his self-understanding.

2. What Is It to Be a Person?

In the realm of Western philosophy, the process of human development is often described as the transformation from a fertilized egg into a fully formed individual. This concept

is commonly associated with the idea that a person possesses certain distinct mental attributes at a specific point in time. This viewpoint is supported by scholars such as *Baker*, who argue that these special mental properties are essential for personhood. (Ref: *Baker, 2000: Ch. 3*)

However, alternative perspectives propose a more indirect correlation between personhood and mental properties. For instance, *Chisholm* suggests that being a person entails the capacity to acquire these properties; (*Chisholm, 1976: 136*) While *Wiggins* posits that personhood is linked to belonging to a category of beings that typically possess these properties in a healthy and mature state. (*Wiggins, 1980, Ch. 6*)

Misbah Yazdi holds a unique perspective on the concept of personhood, which diverges from the views of Western philosophers; While

Western philosophers grapple with determining the precise moment at which an individual can be considered a person.

Misbah Yazdi asserts that human existence begins before birth and extends indefinitely. This belief is rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an, which describes '*Alam Adh-Dhar*' (the world of pre-existence), followed by life in this world and then in another realm.

Misbah Yazdi's viewpoint is supported by various verses in the Qur'an that outline two distinct stages of human creation. The first stage involves the physical formation of the body; While the second stage entails a new form of creation. According to *Misbah Yazdi* and many Islamic scholars, the second stage pertains to the creation of the soul, which is mentioned in other verses as the infusion of God's spirit into human beings. (*Misbah Yazdi, 2012: 343*)

In this respect, Almighty Allah said:

“Certainly, We created man from an extract of clay. Then We made him a drop of [seminal] fluid [lodged] in a secure abode. Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators”.
(*The Qur’an, 23: 12-14*)

Respecting the interpretation of the mentioned verses, *Allamah Tabataba'i*, who was the teacher of *Misbah Yazdi*, highlights an important aspect regarding a verse. He emphasizes that God's use of the word '*Ansh`anaa*' (lit; We produced) signifies the creation of something entirely new and distinct. This indicates a clear distinction between this new

level of creation and the preceding levels.

Tabataba'i argues that this word implies that this new level should possess fundamentally different qualities and virtues. Specifically, he asserts that the essence of the soul is fundamentally distinct from that of the body. Consequently, the attributes and characteristics attributed to the body should differ from those ascribed to the soul in all aspects. (*Tabataba'i, 1972, Vol. 15: 21*)

Misbah Yazdi, in his work, has also referenced this point in various instances, which will be further elaborated upon.

How Does a Person to Persist from One Time to Another?

In the broadest sense of the term 'possible', one may wonder about the types of adventures that can be survived and the events that would inevitably lead to the termination of one's existence.

Additionally, the question arises as to what determines the identity of an individual across different points in time. For instance, when pointing to a child in an old class photograph and claiming, that's me, what distinguishes that particular child as oneself rather than any of the other children? Furthermore, what is it about the way that the child relates to the present self that establishes her as the same person? Similarly, what establishes the connection between the present self and anyone who existed in the past?

This inquiry is commonly referred to as the question of personal identity over time, as it delves into whether the earlier and later versions of an individual are the same or distinct entities. Providing an answer to this question entails explaining the conditions that determine our persistence as individuals.

In response to this question, *Misbah Yazdi* asserts that the only means of preserving the essence of a human being is through the acceptance of the existence of the soul. The soul's distinctiveness is what imparts individuality to a person. According to *Misbah Yazdi*, all materials in this world undergo a perpetual cycle of conversion and transformation into other substances, resulting in the dissolution of their unity.

To illustrate this, consider the realm of agriculture, where a seed is planted in the soil to cultivate a flower. The organic components of the soil are assimilated by the flower, yet the flower itself is not composed of the same organic materials. It differs from its source in numerous aspects. If this process were to continue over thousands of years, with a human being transitioning into a new body of another human being, these

two individuals would be distinct and not identical. Their personalities, identities, emotions, and beliefs would diverge. Hence, they are unequivocally separate entities.

Despite creating an identical human being using the same materials, it is still impossible to consider them as being the same. This is because every entity consists of two components: material and form; While the material possesses potentiality, it is the form that ultimately determines the nature of the entity. The form activates the material, and merely repeating the same form with the same material is insufficient to prove equality. Consequently, the belief is that the soul must persist and return to the body to maintain the same identity as an individual.

The evidence supporting this notion lies in the fact that all cells within the body change throughout one's lifetime, including the cells in the

brain, which are influenced by nourishment. However, we can be certain that the identity of an individual remains constant, and this can be attributed to the soul, which remains alive, unchangeable, and immortal in the presence of God.

This approach can solve other relative questions like: How do we find out who is who? What evidence bears on the question of whether the person here now is the one who was here yesterday?

Numerous endeavors have been made in Western philosophy to address these inquiries. One approach suggests that the persistence of a person can be resolved through first-person memory. According to this viewpoint, if an individual remembers performing a specific action or appears to remember, and there is evidence that someone did it, this provides support for the claim that the

person in question is indeed oneself.

However, others argue that the key to persistence lies in physical continuity. In other words, if the individual who acted bears a striking resemblance to oneself, or even better, if there is some form of physical or spatiotemporal connection between the two, this also serves as a basis to believe that they are the same person.

Misbah Yazdi's aforementioned concepts have the potential to address various inquiries such as the nature of our existence and the metaphysical essence of human beings. These ideas delve into the fundamental properties that define us as individuals, beyond the characteristics that simply classify us as human. They explore the composition of our being, questioning whether we are solely comprised of matter like inanimate objects such as

stones, or if there exists an immaterial aspect within us.

Furthermore, they raise inquiries regarding our spatial boundaries, contemplating whether our extension in space is limited to our physical bodies or if it extends beyond our skin. If the latter is true, the question arises as to what determines these boundaries. Additionally, *Misbah Yazdi's* concepts prompt us to ponder whether we are independent entities or if each of us is merely a state, aspect, or activity of something greater.

Misbah Yazdi presents an alternative perspective on the concept of resurrection (*Ma'ad*) by outlining three key premises. Firstly, he argues that for resurrection to be valid, the existence of the soul is essential. Secondly, the soul must be independent from the body and capable of returning to it at a specific time. Without the soul being separate from the body or lacking independence, the

notion of resurrection loses its validity. Finally, *Misbah Yazdi* asserts that an individual's entire identity should be based on their soul.

Considering the soul as merely a component of a person does not address the problem, as the destruction of the whole i.e., body and soul combination, would render the parts obsolete. Some may view the soul as a characteristic of the body, akin to the scent of a flower. However, *Misbah Yazdi* argues that by removing the essence, all associated features are also eliminated. Consequently, he concludes that the soul is an independent entity that coexists with the body and can occasionally depart from it.

He supports his interpretation by referencing a verse from *The Qur'an* (55: 26), suggesting that it excludes the soul from the statement that all beings on earth will die, as the soul does not reside on earth. (*Misbah Yazdi, 2012: 434*)

Understanding the Persistence Question

The question is roughly what is necessary and sufficient for a past or future being to be someone existing now. We sometimes ask what it takes for someone to remain the same person. The persistence question is often taken to ask what it takes for the same person to exist at two different times. The most common formulation is something like this:

If a person X exists at one time and a person Y exists at another time, under what possible circumstances is it the case that X is Y?

This asks, in effect, what it takes for a past or future person to be you. We have a person existing at one time and a person existing at another, and the question is what is necessary and sufficient for them to be one person rather than two.

These are clear questions about what it takes for us to

persist; But being a person is most often defined as having special mental properties.

Locke, for instance, said:

A person is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places.
(Ref: *Wiggins, 1976*)

Some believe that a past or future person is you just if you who are now a person, can now remember an experience he had then, or he can then remember an experience you are having now. Call this the memory criterion. It is sometimes attributed to *Locke*, though it's doubtful whether he held it. (Ref: *Behan, 1979*)

Most Western philosophers feel immediately drawn to psychological continuity views. *Nichols & Bruno (2010)* give experimental evidence for this. What psychological relation might our persistence consist in? We have already

mentioned memory: a past or future being might be you if and only if you can now remember an experience she had then, or vice versa. This proposal faces two objections, dating to *Sergeant* and *Berkeley* in the 18th century; (Ref: *Behan, 1979*) But more famously discussed by *Reid* and *Butler*.

Accounts of Our Persistence

Overall, four main sorts of answers to the persistence question have been proposed. The most popular are psychological-continuity views. They say that our persistence consists of some psychological relation. You are that future being that in some sense inherits its mental features from you; beliefs, memories, preferences, the capacity for rational thought, and so on, and you are that past being whose mental features you have inherited in this way. There is dispute over what sort of inheritance this has to be, whether it must

be underpinned by some kind of physical continuity, for instance, and whether it requires a non-branching restriction.

There is also disagreement about what mental features need to be inherited; But most philosophers writing on personal identity since the early 20th century have endorsed some version of this view. Advocates of psychological-continuity views include *Shoemaker (1963), Parfit (1971), Nagel (1971), Lewis (1983), Johnston (1987), Hudson (2001), Noonan (2021), and Merricks (2022)*.

The second answer is that our persistence consists of some sort of brute physical relation. You are that past or future being that has your body, or that is the same biological organism as you are or the like. It has nothing to do with psychological facts. Call these brute-physical views. Their advocates include *Carter (1989), Ayers (1990),*

Van Inwagen (1990), Olson (1997) & Mackie (1999).

Some try to combine these views, saying that we need both mental and physical continuity to survive, or that either would suffice without the other. (*Nozick, 1981: Ch. 1; Langford, 2014*)

A different sort of proposal narrativism, is that what it takes for us to persist has to do with the stories we tell about ourselves. We understand our lives in terms of narratives about the momentous events in our past and their influence on our later decisions and character. These narratives can be identity-constituting. The thought is not just that they bear on our personal identity in the sense of the characterization question, what sort of people we are in some fundamental sense.

Narrativists about persistence include *Schechtman and Schroer & Schroer (Ref: Schechtman, 1996, Ch. 5; Schroer & Schroer, 2014)*; Also, critics include

Strawson, and Olson and Witt. (Ref: Strawson, 2008; Olson & Witt, 2019)

Misbah Yazdi offers a unique perspective on the issue of persistence, drawing upon metaphysical and Islamic philosophy. According to his explanation, every moment of existence, regardless of its duration, contains a distinct aspect of one's being. These various aspects represent the countless possibilities of a person's existence and are reflections of a higher metaphysical realm.

Unlike our world, which is bound by the constraints of time, these metaphysical realms transcend such limitations. Within them, the diverse characteristics of an individual are condensed into a simplified form, encompassing all the intricacies of their life. To support his theory, *Misbah Yazdi* cites verses from the Qur'an, where Allah Almighty said:

"There is not a thing but that its sources are with Us, and We do not send it down except in a known measure". (The Qur'an, 15: 21)

Within this particular verse, God conveys the notion that the origins of all things lie within Him, emphasizing that the act of creation or the emergence of new beings is contingent upon time or specific circumstances.

In another verse, God highlights that when He intends to bring something into existence, He does so in a singular instance:

"All His command, when He wills something, is to say to it 'Be,' and it is". (The Qur'an, 36: 82)

The world we inhabit is believed to be a reflection of a higher, metaphysical realm, encompassing all existence in a condensed and simplified manner. In essence, the transformations and passage

of time experienced by individuals can be seen as mere glimpses of the greater human experience that exists beyond our immediate perception.

The concept of the reality of human existence can provide answers to various inquiries regarding human identity and the continuity of individuals. However, it is important to note that this understanding requires certain prerequisites, such as having faith in the Qur'an and possessing a comprehensive comprehension of Islamic philosophy, particularly from the perspective of *Mulla Sadra*. He is often regarded as the pioneer of existentialism philosophy, distinct from Western Existentialism, posited that Reality is synonymous with Existence. According to his viewpoint, an essence is merely a general concept and lacks actual existence.

Mulla Sadra's metaphysics places greater emphasis on existence rather than essence,

with essences being subject to change and determined based on the intensity of their existence. Furthermore, he asserts that Existence is a singular and uncomplicated reality, which can be graded in terms of its perfection.

Misbah Yazdi subscribes to the notion that existence is not uniform; But rather exists in different grades. The lower grades are characterized by imperfections and limitations; While the higher levels are simpler, purer, and closer to unity. As existence grades down, it expands, and vice versa.

According to *Misbah Yazdi*, each human being is a reflection of a higher reality that is less limited and more perfect. Unity and simplicity are among the perfections that can be found in existence. By referring to this higher and purer being, we can establish a clear identity and ensure the persistence of any human being. It is worth noting that

Misbah Yazdi does not blindly follow the theory of *Mulla Sadra*; But rather has some objections or improvements to it. (*Legenhausen, 2023: 27*)

To provide a clear overview of the topic, it is necessary to highlight both the similarities and differences between contemporary Western philosophy and Islamic philosophy. One notable similarity is their shared focus on the human being and their identity. Both philosophical systems aim to address questions using reason and draw conclusions that can be applied to other branches of science.

However, the differences between the two outweigh the similarities. In contemporary Western philosophy, the human being is viewed as a purely physical entity with no inherent superiority over other things. According to this perspective, humans are complex machines, and all human behavior and actions should be interpreted in a

physical and observable manner. This philosophy denies the existence of any metaphysical aspects of the human being, which is considered its fundamental weakness and falsehood. By relying solely on the senses and intellect, this philosophy rejects the possibility of anything beyond their scope, leading to unanswered questions and unresolved mysteries regarding the nature of the human being.

On the contrary, Islamic philosophy, particularly the interpretation advocated by *Misbah Yazdi*, does not confine human existence to the realm of the physical and material. Instead, it endeavors to broaden the horizons of human experience, encompassing both temporal and metaphysical dimensions. The notion of humans as eternal beings endowed with divine attributes is far from being a trivial matter that can be easily dismissed.

Table 1. Comparison of Islamic Philosophy and Western Philosophy

Similarities		
The Challenges of human identity and exploration of the human condition persist.		
Philosophical perspective aids in the resolution of these problems.		
Differences	Islamic Philosophy	Western Philosophy
Restricting the concept of humanity solely to its physical attributes	No	Yes
Contemplating the existence of a non-physical entity within humans	Yes	No
Analyzing all human characteristics based on the mind or other physical factors	No	Yes
Defining human based on their physical attributes and bodily characteristics	No	Yes
Holding the belief that humans have an eternal existence	Yes	No
Utilizing religious texts such as the Quran to seek answers and understanding.	Yes	No
Developing a unique perspective on this subject matter	Yes	No
Addressing the issue of identity through problem-solving	Yes	No
Utilizing the concept of the soul as a means to resolve the problem	Yes	No
Providing evidence of a steadfast character and self-concept	Yes	No

Conclusion

The primary focus of this article was to provide a comprehensive understanding of human identity, unity, and individuality, as well as the persistence of each person's personality. Both Islamic and contemporary Western Philosophy have endeavored to address these complex issues and offer definitive answers. It is important to acknowledge that any answer provided will serve as a foundational principle, influencing subsequent interpretations of the human condition. These interpretations, in turn, contribute to the development of various disciplines such as Sociology, Psychology, and Law.

In this article, *Misbah Yazdi* serves as the representative of Islamic philosophy. According to his perspective, the essence of a human being lies within their soul, with the body serving as a temporary vessel that can be substituted by other means in different circumstances. The true reality,

stability, and identity of an individual are contingent upon their soul. *Yazdi* firmly asserts that the denial of the existence of the soul would result in an absence of stability and reliability in understanding the human condition.

It is important to note that he does not align himself with dualism, which posits that the human being is composed of both soul and body. Instead, he emphasizes the significance of the soul and advocates for the resolution of all matters about identity-based on this fundamental element. Consequently, this key principle distinguishes *Misbah Yazdi's* philosophy from that of Western thinkers.

Acknowledgment

This paper is dedicated to the pure soul of *Allameh Misbah Yazdi*, from which I learned many scientific and spiritual benefits.

Funding

The financial resources of any scientific center were not used in the writing of the article.

Author Contributions

The corresponding author and the second author participated in writing the text of the article, and the third author participated in the scientific discussions of the article. Therefore, all three authors contributed to the final writing of the article.

70) International Multi. J. of PURE LIFE. 11(37), Winter. 2024

List of References

1. The Holy Qur'an.

2. Ayers, Michael. (1990). **Locke**. London: Routledge.

3. Baker, Lynne Rudder. (2000). **Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

4. Behan, David. (1979). **Locke on Persons and Personal Identity**. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 9: 53-75.

5. Carter, William. (1989). **How to Change Your Mind**. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 19: 1-14.

6. Chisholm, Roderick. (1976). **Person and Object**. La Salle, IL: Open Court.

7. Gallagher, Shaun. (2013). **The Oxford Handbook of the Self**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

8. Glover, Jonathan. (1988). **The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity**. London: Penguin.

9. Hudson, Hud. (2001). **A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person**. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

10. Johnston, Mark. (1987). **Human Beings**. *Journal of Philosophy*, 84: 59-83.

11. Kind, Amy. (2015). **Persons and Personal Identity (Key Concepts in Philosophy)**. USA: Polity.

12. Langford, Simon. (2014). **On What We Are and How We Persist**. *Pacific Philosophical*, 95, 356-371.

13. Legenhausen, Mohammad, (2023). **Allamah Misbah's Puzzle about the Emergence of the Soul in the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra**. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Pure Life*. 10(34), 27-58.

14. Lewis, David. (1983). **Survival and Identity**. In: *The Identities of Persons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

15. Mackie, David. (1999). **Personal Identity and Dead People**. *Philosophical Studies*, 95, 219-242.

16. Merricks, Trenton. (2022). **Self and Identity**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

17. Misbah Yazdi, Mohammad Taqi. (2012). **Ma'aref Qur'an**. Qom: Imam Khomeini Institution for Education and Research. [In Persian]

18. Nagel, Thomas. (1971). **Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness**. *Synthese*, 22, 396-413.

19. Nichols, Shaun. & Bruno, Michael. (2010). **Intuitions about Personal Identity: An Empirical Study**. *Philosophical Psychology*, 23, 293-312.

20. Noonan, Harold. (2019). **Personal Identity**. 3rd Edition. UK: Routledge.
21. Noonan, Harold. (2021). **Personal Identity and the Hybrid View: A Middle Way**. *Metaphysica*, 22, 263-283.
22. Nozick, Robert. (1981). **Philosophical Explanations**. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
23. Olson, Eric. (2022). **Personal Identity**. In: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
24. Olson, Eric. (1997). **The Human Animal: Personal Identity Without Psychology**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
25. Olson, Eric. & Witt, Karsten. (2019). **Narrative and Persistence**. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 49, 419-434.
26. Parfit, Derek. (1971). **Personal Identity**. *Philosophical Review*, 80, 3-27.
27. Perry, John. (1978). **A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality (Hackett Philosophical Dialogues)**. USA: Hackett Publishing Company.
28. Perry, John. (2008). **Personal Identity**. 2nd Edition. USA: University of California Press.
29. Schechtman, Marya. (1996). **The Constitution of Selves**. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
30. Schroer, Jeanine Weekes. & Schroer, Robert. (2014). **Getting the Story Right: A Reductionist Narrative Account of Personal Identity**. *Philosophical Studies*, 171, 445-469.
31. Shoemaker, Sydney. (1963). **Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity**. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
32. Strawson, Galen. (2008). **Against Narrativity, in his Real Materialism and Other Essays**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
33. Tabataba'i, Syed Mohammad Hossein. (1972). **Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an**. Lebanon: Alami. [In Arabic]
34. Van Inwagen, Peter. (1990). **Material Beings**. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
35. Wiggins, David. (1976). **Locke, Butler and the Stream of Consciousness: And Men as a Natural Kind**. *Philosophy*, 51(196), 131-158.
36. Wiggins, David. (1980). **Sameness and Substance**. Oxford: Blackwell.

AUTHOR BIOSKETCHES

Vahidi Mehrajardi, Shahabodin. Assistant Prof. in Department of Philosophy and Wisdom, Faculty of Theology and Education, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran.

✓ Email: vahidi@meybod.ac.ir

✓ ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6211-9961>

Meftah, Mohammad. Assistant Prof. in Department of Shi'i Theology, Faculty of Shi'i Studies, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran.

✓ Email: mohamad.meftah@gmail.com

✓ ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0227-7980>

Meftah, Amir Hossein. Researcher in Islamic Seminary of Qom, Qom, Iran

✓ Email: meftah2476@gmail.com

✓ ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-5708-1413>

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Vahidi Mehrajardi, Shahabodin. Meftah, Mohammad. & Meftah, Amir Hossein. (2024). **Personal Identity in Islamic Philosophy and Contemporary Western Philosophy (Focusing on the Thoughts of Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi).** *International Multidisciplinary Journal of PURE LIFE*, 11(37), 49-72.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22034/imjpl.2023.17489.1131>

DOR: <https://dorl.net/20.1001.1.26767619.2024.11.37.2.3>

URL: http://p-l-journals.miu.ac.ir/article_9026.html

